

UNION WORKHOUSES (IRELAND).



RETURN to an ORDER of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 19 March 1845—*for*,

COPY " of REPORT of the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the
Execution of the CONTRACTS for certain UNION WORKHOUSES in *Ireland*;
with Copy of Treasury Minute thereon."

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 20 March 1845.

COPY of a LETTER from Lieutenant-colonel Barney to C. E. Trevelyan, Esq.

Sir,

London, 12 February 1845.

WITH reference to the instruction conveyed under your letter of the 27th September last, I have now the honour to submit the Report on the Inquiry into the Execution of the Contracts for certain Union Workhouses in Ireland. The result shows that the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of every workhouse, to the probable extent of 12½ per cent. upon the cost of fixtures, fittings, &c. amounting to 24,744 *l*.

The probable estimate for repairs now required, clearly to be traced to defects in the original construction, is 21,932 *l*. The total amount 46,706 *l*.

It will be observed, that the specific information required upon each workhouse is a repetition, with the exception of the sums in excess upon the original cost, and amounts required for repairs.

Should further information be required upon any points connected with the Report, I am prepared to afford such information to the fullest extent.

I have, &c.

(signed) George Barney,
Lieutenant-colonel Royal Engineers.

APPOINTMENT of a COMMISSION to inquire into the Execution of the
CONTRACTS for UNION WORKHOUSES in *Ireland*.

WHEREAS the Select Committee of the House of Commons, to whom was referred the consideration of the Report of the Commissioner for inquiring into the execution of the Contracts for certain Union Workhouses in Ireland, reported in the last Session of Parliament the necessity for further inquiry, in order to determine whether, with regard to choice of sites, the execution of the building, and amount of cost, any unnecessary expense has been incurred in respect to the said workhouses, and, if so, whether any portion of such expense should be remitted: and whereas it appears to us expedient that a Commission should accordingly be issued, for the purpose of ascertaining how far the sums expended in the erection of the several workhouses in Ireland have been properly applied, so as to give to the several unions of parishes in that country a fair return in the value of the buildings for the amount expended upon them: these are to appoint, authorize, and require you, Lieutenant-colonel George Barney, of the Royal Engineers, taking to your assistance such experienced clerk of works in the engineer department as may, in the judgment of the Master-general and Board of Ordnance, be best qualified for such a service, to be a Commission for the above purpose; and, after visiting and carefully examining each workhouse in Ireland, to report to us the result of your inquiries, in accordance with the Instructions herewith annexed, for which this shall be your warrant.

Whitehall, Treasury Chambers,
the 27th day of Sept. 1844. }

(signed) Robert Peel.
Henry Goulburn.
Arthur Lennox.

INSTRUCTIONS for the COMMISSIONER appointed to inquire into the Execution of the CONTRACTS for Building UNION WORKHOUSES in Ireland.

You will herewith receive copies of the Report of the Commission for inquiring into the execution of the Contracts for certain Workhouses in Ireland, and of Messrs. Nicholls' and Wilkinson's observations on the same; and also the Report of the Select Committee which was appointed by the House of Commons, during the late Session, to consider the Report of the said Commission.

From a careful perusal and consideration of those papers you will clearly understand the nature of the complaints made by the several Boards of Guardians in Ireland, and the general scope of the investigation committed to you.

You will proceed to visit, in succession, each union workhouse in Ireland, of which a list will be found in the papers herewith transmitted.

As those workhouses were all erected under the direction of Mr. Nicholls, the Poor Law Commissioner, and Mr. Wilkinson, the architect to the Poor Law Commissioners in Ireland; and as, in certain cases, the conduct of those gentlemen has been questioned by Mr. Pennithorne, you will, in all cases in which you may judge it necessary to the formation of a just opinion, either require from those gentlemen on the one hand, or from Mr. Pennithorne on the other, information in writing, or personally examine them as to the several points on which their judgments may have differed.

You will, from personal inspection of every union workhouse in Ireland, carefully ascertain whether objection can be fairly taken to the construction of the buildings, or the accommodation afforded in them, and whether due provision has been made for the supply of water for the inmates, for the drainage, for the enclosure walls, and for all that is necessary to their purpose as union workhouses.

You will make a specific Report on each of the following points, in reference to every workhouse in Ireland:—

1. Whether the sum which has been applied to the erection of the workhouse exceeds the proper cost of the building erected, considering the extent of the accommodation afforded, and the part of the country in which it is situated. You will also report, in case of such excess, your opinion as to its amount.

2. Whether, with reference to the period and cost at which each building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected in buildings of a similar character, properly constructed, at a like cost; and if so, whether the cause of such excess has been the result of unavoidable accident, or can be clearly traced to defect in the original construction; and supposing the excess to be in any degree owing to such defects, what amount of extra expenditure has been occasioned thereby.

3. Whether the extra expense which has been incurred above the original estimates furnished for the completion of the union workhouse, is to be ascribed to the inadequacy of the original estimates, or to the exclusion from them of certain works not foreseen or calculated upon at the time, though afterwards found necessary; or whether such excess has been occasioned by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

As you may find it necessary in certain cases, in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion on the points included in this inquiry, to call in the aid of some architect or other professional person more particularly conversant with the practical execution of building in Ireland, or in that part thereof in which a particular workhouse may be situated, you are hereby authorized to consult such persons, and to make such allowance to the parties so consulted by you as may appear to you to be reasonable and proper.

It being most important that a decision as to the several points at issue should be come to with as little delay as possible, you will lose no time in entering upon the inquiry, and will bring it to a close with as much despatch as is compatible with a due examination of the points referred to you.

(signed) *Robert Peel.*
Henry Goulburn.
Arthur Lennox.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

BEFORE proceeding with the Report, it seems necessary to a clear understanding of the different points upon which specific information is required, that explanation be afforded as to the means adopted for attaining the results reported.

1. Every workhouse in Ireland has been closely examined with reference to site, accommodation, ventilation, supply of water, drainage, enclosure, construction, and execution of work.

2. With reference to the question, "Whether the sum applied to the erection of each workhouse exceeds the proper cost?" ten building estimates of different classes, framed by the Commissioners' architect, have been carefully examined and compared with estimates framed under the Ordnance contract prices for the districts in which the different classes of workhouses are situated; these have in like manner been compared with such of the contractors' original estimates as could be obtained. Taking into consideration all the circumstances connected with the execution of the various contracts, the result of the inquiry is satisfactory as to the fair average cost of each workhouse, as far as the original contracts apply, although the estimates framed under Ordnance prices exhibit a less amount than the average cost of the workhouses.

3. In like manner, ten of the contractors' accounts for extra work have been as carefully examined and compared with the Ordnance contract prices as the nature of the accounts admit: the result of this examination shows, that the sums paid to contractors generally exceed the cost at which similar works would have been done under the Ordnance contracts by about 10 per cent. The amounts paid, however, do not afford more than fair remunerating prices, taking into consideration the various circumstances under which the work has been performed, and the great delay which has taken place in the final arrangement and settlement of accounts.

Although the above observations may be considered satisfactory as to the value of the extra works, fittings, fixtures, &c., under the method adopted for carrying these works into execution, yet it is an undoubted fact, that had such extras been embraced in the original contract, the work would have been done equally as well at a less cost. It is further considered, that the want of matured plans has originated additional expenditure in carrying out improvements leading to the alteration and removal of work already partially completed. These two questions combined tend to the conclusion that the sum applied to the building of every workhouse in Ireland exceeds the proper cost to the probable extent of 12½ per cent. upon the sums paid for extra work, fixtures, fittings, &c. This opinion is borne out by that of competent parties, extensive builders in Ireland. In this view the excess amounts to 24,774*l*.

4. Referring to the question of expenditure now required, arising out of repairs consequent on bad construction, the estimated cost of such repair has been obtained from actual measurement, as far as practicable, such measurements being collected from ten different classes of buildings, as in the previous cases, and the cost is calculated at the prices for the various work in detail. The repairs provided for consist of renewals of mortar floors, replacing stoves by grates, pointing walls, window-frames, and coping, repairing plaster and flagging. These repairs apply to the buildings generally in a greater or less degree. The estimated cost is 21,932*l*.

5. With reference to the question, "Whether objection can be fairly taken to the construction of the buildings or the accommodation afforded, and whether due provision has been made for the supply of water for the inmates, for drainage, for enclosure walls, and all that is necessary for rendering these buildings adequate to their purposes as union workhouses?" the opinion of one or more of the guardians, of the medical officers, of the clerks to the guardians, and the masters and matrons, has been occasionally taken, the various subjects have been carefully considered in all their bearings, and are distinctly reported upon under each head of inquiry, as well as the cause of wet walls, extra charges, &c.; see the following pages. Subject to the observations contained in those Reports, I do not see that objection can fairly be taken to the sites, accommodation, or any other point embraced in this paragraph of the Instructions.

Geo. Barney,
Lieut.-col. Royal Engineers.

In order to avoid the repetition of the same words in the Reports on the several Workhouses, the particulars have been condensed into the following Table.

The Reports upon the greater number are in the same terms as that on Abbey-leix (*See page 6*). In all cases where there is any variation, the Reports are given at length (*See pages 6, 7 and 8*).

No. of Report.	NAME OF PLACE.	Number of Paupers.	Cost of Building.			Estate of proper Cost of Building.			Estate on Repairs now required, through defective Construction.			Total Estate.		
			£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1	Abbeyleix	500	7,328	2	8	165	-	-	143	-	-	308	-	-
2	Antrim	700	7,791	-	-	90	-	-	114	-	-	304	-	-
3	Ardee	600	7,570	3	8	178	-	-	212	-	-	367	-	-
4	Armagh	1,000	12,360	-	8	497	-	-	255	-	-	683	-	-
5	Athlone	900	10,901	14	10	385	-	-	214	-	-	499	-	-
6	Athy	600	9,910	-	8	125	-	-	108	-	-	233	-	-
7	Bailieboro'	600	8,918	7	3	293	-	-	327	-	-	620	-	-
8	Ballina	1,300	12,030	2	5	190	-	-	133	-	-	323	-	-
9	Ballinasloe	1,000	10,628	1	7	320	-	-	180	-	-	480	-	-
10	Ballinrobe	800	8,505	-	9	145	-	-	264	-	-	409	-	-
11	Ballycastle	900	6,888	10	10	105	-	-	60	-	-	165	-	-
12	Ballymena	900	9,001	3	3	187	-	-	138	-	-	305	-	-
13	Ballymoney	700	8,578	18	2	121	-	-	180	-	-	261	-	-
14	Ballyshannon	500	8,372	4	3	78	-	-	143	-	-	218	-	-
15	Balrothery	400	6,927	7	0	200	-	-	227	-	-	427	-	-
16	Baldinglass	500	7,781	18	1	150	-	-	151	-	-	301	-	-
17	Banbridge	800	10,687	4	-	343	-	-	217	-	-	560	-	-
18	Bandon	900	8,804	3	7	213	-	-	170	-	-	383	-	-
19	Bantry	800	7,502	12	11	77	-	-	146	-	-	223	-	-
20	Belfast	1,000	18,465	12	7	638	-	-	295	-	-	831	-	-
21	Boyle	700	8,297	16	8	180	-	-	197	-	-	377	-	-
22	Caharciveen	(See p. 6)	400	6,529	12	10	91	-	-	-	-	91	-	-
23	Callan	600	7,958	7	10	120	-	-	256	-	-	406	-	-
24	Carlow	(See p. 6)	800	not settled.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	Carrickmacross	500	6,823	16	3	161	-	-	35	-	-	196	-	-
26	Carrick-on-Shannon	800	9,653	18	4	246	-	-	229	-	-	475	-	-
27	Carrick-on-Suir	500	7,143	19	9	197	-	-	125	-	-	353	-	-
28	Cashel	700	7,830	10	9	196	-	-	223	-	-	429	-	-
29	Castiboe	600	7,949	5	1	162	-	-	168	-	-	330	-	-
30	Castlelany	(See p. 6)	800	not settled.	-	-	-	-	124	-	-	-	-	-
31	Castlerea	900	3,423	2	10	93	-	-	95	-	-	188	-	-
32	Castlereagh	1,000	10,083	8	1	132	-	-	215	-	-	247	-	-
33	Cavan	1,300	12,394	15	8	200	-	-	183	-	-	383	-	-
34	Calbridge	400	7,256	15	7	204	-	-	137	-	-	341	-	-
35	Clifton	300	4,868	7	8	193	-	-	148	-	-	309	-	-
36	Clogheen	500	7,141	14	8	148	-	-	100	-	-	248	-	-
37	Clogher	(See p. 6)	500	not settled.	-	-	-	-	210	-	-	-	-	-
38	Clones	600	7,800	17	5	173	-	-	121	-	-	294	-	-
39	Clonmel	(See p. 6)	800	2,621	8	2	121	-	-	-	-	121	-	-
40	Coleraine	700	9,217	-	-	165	-	-	192	-	-	347	-	-
41	Cookstown	600	6,938	3	8	187	-	-	124	-	-	321	-	-
42	Cootehill	800	11,502	7	8	363	-	-	191	-	-	554	-	-
43	Cork	2,000	19,183	2	3	573	-	-	160	-	-	733	-	-
44	Donegal	500	7,680	12	4	165	-	-	165	-	-	330	-	-
45	Downpatrick	1,000	12,383	19	7	302	-	-	113	-	-	415	-	-
46	Drughda	800	9,884	17	5	277	-	-	157	-	-	434	-	-
47	Dublin (North)	(See p. 7)	2,000	7,645	5	4	327	-	-	-	-	327	-	-
48	Dublin (South)	2,000	10,019	8	4	640	-	-	30	-	-	570	-	-
49	Druck	800	9,158	6	10	300	-	-	207	-	-	507	-	-
50	Dunfmlagh	300	4,392	17	-	38	-	-	110	-	-	146	-	-
51	Dungannon	800	9,178	13	10	212	-	-	180	-	-	392	-	-
52	Dungarvon	800	9,372	17	11	219	-	-	169	-	-	378	-	-
53	Dunmanway	400	9,842	14	10	110	-	-	203	-	-	313	-	-
54	Dunshaughlin	400	6,795	7	7	148	-	-	199	-	-	347	-	-
55	Edenderry	600	7,933	18	1	259	-	-	270	-	-	529	-	-
56	Ennis	800	8,282	0	10	182	-	-	177	-	-	359	-	-
57	Enniscorthy	600	7,458	8	8	146	-	-	124	-	-	270	-	-
58	Ennistymon	800	8,211	17	1	189	-	-	96	-	-	285	-	-
59	Enniskillen	(See p. 7)	1,000	10,904	5	8	107	-	-	-	-	107	-	-
60	Ferry	(See p. 7)	900	7,088	3	4	112	-	-	-	-	112	-	-
61	Galway	1,000	11,372	1	0	241	-	-	169	-	-	410	-	-
62	Glenites	(See p. 7)	600	not settled.	-	-	-	-	96	-	-	-	-	-
63	Geary	500	7,399	-	7	145	-	-	163	-	-	298	-	-

FOR CERTAIN UNION WORKHOUSES IN IRELAND.

5

No. of Report.	NAME OF PLACE.	Number of Paupers.	Cost of Building.			Excess of proper Cost of Building.			Excess on Repairs now required, through defective Construction.			Total Excess.		
			£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
64	Gort	600	6,791	3	10	137	-	-	268	-	-	345	-	-
65	Gortin	200	3,070	8	0	77	-	-	120	-	-	197	-	-
66	Granard	800	7,881	3	-	110	-	-	198	-	-	303	-	-
67	Inishowen	000	7,574	14	7	81	-	-	90	-	-	187	-	-
68	Kanturk	800	9,281	5	4	265	-	-	208	-	-	473	-	-
69	Kells	600	8,488	15	-	177	-	-	111	-	-	288	-	-
70	Kenmare	500	6,502	14	0	67	-	-	145	-	-	242	-	-
71	Kilkeel	300	8,222	12	5	173	-	-	180	-	-	323	-	-
72	Kilkenny	1,800	13,496	18	2	222	-	-	122	-	-	354	-	-
73	Kilmarney	800	9,160	8	8	101	-	-	211	-	-	312	-	-
74	Kilmallock	800	10,756	11	7	354	-	-	221	-	-	585	-	-
75	Kilrush	800	9,555	14	8	181	-	-	227	-	-	408	-	-
76	Kinsale	500	8,131	-	7	207	-	-	140	-	-	347	-	-
77	Larne	400	7,005	10	7	220	-	-	85	-	-	326	-	-
78	Latterkenney	(See p. 8)	500	not settled	-	-	-	-	180	-	-	-	-	-
79	Limerick	1,000	15,415	1	0	489	-	-	325	-	-	814	-	-
80	Lisburn	500	7,704	8	1	214	-	-	328	-	-	329	-	-
81	Lisnakea	800	9,087	15	5	225	-	-	240	-	-	475	-	-
82	Lisnakea	500	7,835	19	2	209	-	-	140	-	-	342	-	-
83	Listowel	700	8,814	5	11	131	-	-	160	-	-	281	-	-
84	Londonderry	800	9,759	10	4	206	-	-	200	-	-	406	-	-
85	Loughfoyle	1,000	9,925	-	2	322	-	-	315	-	-	637	-	-
86	Loughrea	800	8,788	17	7	189	-	-	280	-	-	469	-	-
87	Lowtherstown	800	9,740	18	9	79	-	-	115	-	-	194	-	-
88	Lurgan	800	8,881	18	0	210	-	-	330	-	-	540	-	-
89	Macroom	000	8,559	13	11	186	-	-	123	-	-	309	-	-
90	Magherafelt	900	9,217	14	0	285	-	-	190	-	-	475	-	-
91	Mallow	700	9,423	2	10	294	-	-	180	-	-	474	-	-
92	Manor Hamilton	500	6,841	3	5	118	-	-	195	-	-	313	-	-
93	Middleton	800	9,223	3	2	241	-	-	210	-	-	451	-	-
94	Milford	(See p. 8)	-	building in progress.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
95	Monaghan	700	8,065	10	8	202	-	-	288	-	-	490	-	-
96	Monaghan	900	10,073	18	1	200	-	-	182	-	-	442	-	-
97	Mountmellick	800	8,080	13	0	85	-	-	124	-	-	209	-	-
98	Mullingar	800	9,088	7	0	157	-	-	110	-	-	267	-	-
99	Nass	550	8,058	12	10	315	-	-	163	-	-	483	-	-
100	Navy	500	7,440	0	-	115	-	-	275	-	-	390	-	-
101	Nenagh	1,000	10,951	0	11	185	-	-	210	-	-	395	-	-
102	Newcastle	350	9,742	4	11	285	-	-	210	-	-	495	-	-
103	New Ross	000	9,535	13	0	189	-	-	168	-	-	357	-	-
104	Newry	1,000	11,806	18	1	384	-	-	225	-	-	609	-	-
105	Newtownards	000	7,788	12	5	121	-	-	66	-	-	177	-	-
106	Newtown Limavady	000	8,036	14	5	114	-	-	200	-	-	320	-	-
107	Oldcastle	000	8,187	11	-	155	-	-	195	-	-	381	-	-
108	Omagh	800	8,990	3	1	271	-	-	220	-	-	491	-	-
109	Parson's Town	800	9,445	19	8	215	-	-	187	-	-	402	-	-
110	Rathdown	000	8,502	13	9	234	-	-	170	-	-	404	-	-
111	Rathfriland	000	8,229	4	2	171	-	-	104	-	-	275	-	-
112	Rathkeale	800	9,401	14	0	221	-	-	220	-	-	441	-	-
113	Roscommon	000	9,880	15	0	103	-	-	168	-	-	269	-	-
114	Roscrea	700	9,114	12	9	101	-	-	280	-	-	451	-	-
115	Scuriff	000	8,274	12	8	134	-	-	172	-	-	306	-	-
116	Shillelagh	400	7,297	6	5	154	-	-	100	-	-	254	-	-
117	Skibbereen	800	9,246	16	8	190	-	-	213	-	-	408	-	-
118	Sligo	1,900	18,211	17	11	407	-	-	144	-	-	611	-	-
119	Strabane	800	9,770	5	3	205	-	-	200	-	-	511	-	-
120	Stranorlar	400	9,380	10	-	121	-	-	65	-	-	186	-	-
121	Swinsford	(See p. 8)	700	not settled	-	-	-	-	180	-	-	-	-	-
122	Thurles	700	8,418	12	0	141	-	-	200	-	-	421	-	-
123	Tipperary	700	8,201	4	10	244	-	-	220	-	-	523	-	-
124	Trillick	1,000	10,210	4	7	161	-	-	205	-	-	366	-	-
125	Trim	500	8,709	7	8	288	-	-	272	-	-	540	-	-
126	Tuam	800	8,082	0	8	210	-	-	80	-	-	270	-	-
127	Tullamore	700	8,428	18	5	182	-	-	163	-	-	375	-	-
128	Waterford	900	11,843	3	0	264	-	-	213	-	-	477	-	-
129	Westport	1,000	9,641	10	7	160	-	-	215	-	-	375	-	-
130	Wexford	600	8,767	1	7	90	-	-	175	-	-	260	-	-

1. *Abbeyleix*; 500 Paupers; Cost, £.7,829. 2. 8.

1. CONSIDERING the extent of accommodation afforded, and the part of the country in which the workhouse is situated, the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of the building in the probable amount of 165*l.*, being 12½ per cent. on the cost of fixtures, fittings, and extra work.

2. With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected from buildings of a similar character, properly constructed at a like cost, to the probable amount of 143*l.*, arising from defects clearly traced to original construction.

3. The expense which has been incurred above the original estimate furnished for the completion of the building, is to be ascribed to the exclusion from it of certain alterations and improvements not foreseen or calculated upon, but afterwards found necessary, in addition to various work of absolute necessity, foreseen, but not embraced in the original contract, and not by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

22. *Caheriveen* (unoccupied); 400 Paupers; Cost, £. 6,529. 12. 10.

1. CONSIDERING the extent of accommodation afforded, and the part of the country in which the workhouse is situated, the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of the building, in the probable amount of 91*l.*, being 12½ per cent. on the cost of fixtures, fittings, and extra work.

2. With reference to the period, and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required do not exceed those which might be expected from buildings of a similar character properly constructed at a like cost.

3. The expense which has been incurred above the original estimate is to be ascribed to the exclusion from it of certain alterations and improvements, not foreseen or calculated upon, but afterwards found necessary, in addition to various works of absolute necessity, foreseen, but not embraced in the original contract, and not by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

24. *Carlow* (unoccupied); 800 Paupers; Cost, not settled.

THE accounts for this building not having yet been made up, the specific reports required under the instructions cannot be had.

30. *Castleblaney* (unoccupied); 800 Paupers; Cost, not settled.

THE accounts for this building not having yet been made up, the specific reports required under the 1st and 3d heads of instruction, cannot be had.

With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected from buildings of a similar character, properly constructed, at a like cost, to the probable amount of 134*l.*, arising from defects clearly to be traced to original construction.

37. *Clogher*; 500 Paupers; Cost, not settled.

THE accounts for this building not having been yet made up, the specific reports required under the 1st and 3d heads of instruction cannot be had.

With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected from buildings of a similar character, properly constructed, at a like cost, to the probable amount of 210*l.*, arising from defects clearly to be traced to original construction.

39. *Clonmel*; 600 Paupers; Cost, £. 2,921. 8. 2.

1. CONSIDERING the extent of accommodation afforded, and the part of the country in which the workhouse is situated, the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of the building in the probable amount of 121*l.*, being 12½ per cent. on the cost of fixtures, fittings, and extra work.

2. With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected,

erected, the repairs now required do not exceed those which might be expected from buildings of a similar character, properly constructed, at a like cost.

3. The expense which has been incurred above the original estimate furnished for the completion of the building, is to be ascribed to the exclusion from it of certain alterations and improvements not foreseen or calculated upon, but afterwards found necessary, in addition to various works of absolute necessity, foreseen, but not embraced in the original contract, and not by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

47. *Dublin, North*; 2,000 Paupers; Cost, £. 7,645. s. 4.

1. CONSIDERING the extent of accommodation afforded, and the part of the county in which the workhouse is situated, the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of the building in the probable amount of 327*l.*, being 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the cost of fixtures, fittings, and extra work.

2. With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required do not exceed those which might be expected from buildings of a similar character properly constructed, at a like cost.

3. The expense which has been incurred above the original estimate furnished for the completion of the building, is to be ascribed to the exclusion from it of certain alterations and improvements not foreseen or calculated upon, but afterwards found necessary, in addition to various work of absolute necessity, foreseen, but not embraced in the original contract, and not by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

N.B.—This building was not erected under the authority of the Poor Law Commissioners, or for the purposes of a workhouse.

59. *Enniskillen* (unoccupied); 1,000 Paupers; Cost, £. 10,994. s. 8.

1. CONSIDERING the extent of accommodation afforded and the part of the country in which the workhouse is situated, the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of the building in the probable amount of 167*l.*, being 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the cost of fixtures, fittings, and extra work.

2. With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required do not exceed those which might be expected from buildings of a similar character properly constructed, at a like cost.

3. The expense which has been incurred above the original estimate furnished for the completion of the building, is to be ascribed to the exclusion from it of certain alterations and improvements not foreseen or calculated upon, but afterwards found necessary, in addition to various works of absolute necessity, foreseen, but not embraced in the original contract, and not by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

60. *Fermoy*; 900 Paupers; Cost, £. 7,088. s. 4.

1. CONSIDERING the extent of accommodation afforded, and the part of the country in which the workhouse is situated, the sum applied exceeds the proper cost of the building in the probable amount of 112*l.*, being 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the cost of fixtures, fittings, and extra work.

2. With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required do not exceed those which might be expected from buildings of a similar character properly constructed, at a like cost.

3. The expense which has been incurred above the original estimate furnished for the completion of the building is to be ascribed to the exclusion from it of certain alterations and improvements not foreseen or calculated upon, but afterwards found necessary, in addition to various work of absolute necessity, foreseen, but not embraced in the original contract, and not by any misapplication or waste of the sums raised.

62. *Glenties* (unoccupied); 800 Paupers; Cost, not settled.

THE accounts for this building not having yet been made up, the specific reports required under the 1st and 3d heads of instruction cannot be had.

With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected in build-

ings of a similar character properly constructed, at a like cost, to the probable amount of 196*l.* arising from defects clearly to be traced to original construction.

78. *Letterkenny* (unoccupied); 500 Paupers; Cost, not settled.

THE accounts for this building not being yet made up, the specific reports required under the 1st and 3d heads of instruction cannot be had.

With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected from buildings of a similar character, properly constructed, at a like cost, to the probable amount of 150*l.*, arising from defects clearly to be traced to original construction.

94. *Bilford*; 800 Paupers.

THIS building is in progress only, and the desired specific reports cannot be had.

121. *Swineford* (unoccupied); 700 Paupers; Cost, not settled.

THE accounts for this building not being yet made up, the specific reports required under the 1st and 3d heads of instruction cannot be had.

With reference to the period and cost at which the building has been erected, the repairs now required exceed those which might have been expected from buildings of a similar character properly constructed, at a like cost, to the probable amount of 160*l.*, arising from defects clearly to be traced to original construction.

Sites.

THE very important duty of the selection of sites for the workhouses appears to have been generally carried out with great judgment: with the exception of three or four, which are probably rather too distant from the townships, the sites are extremely well chosen; the important points of salubrity, drainage, supply of water, local position with reference to the convenience of the guardians as well as the general interests of the unions, have been kept in view. The greater number of sites are on commanding ground; there are, however, a portion on low ground, and a few in the immediate vicinity of marshes or bogs; but I cannot learn that such positions are injurious to the health of the inmates.

The sites considered most inconvenient in point of distance from townships, or difficulty of access, are those of Caherciveen, Trillick, Carrick-on-Shannon, and Balrothery; several others have been objected to on account of locality, cost, or rental; but the explanation afforded by the parties who selected the sites and arranged the purchase or rental, appears to be generally satisfactory.

Accommodation.

WORKHOUSES for the accommodation of 700 paupers and upwards do not afford the desired extent of day-room either for males or females; for instance, in a building for 1,000 paupers, the day-rooms, one for each class, measure 40 feet by 17 feet. With a full house, there would be 170 males and an equal number of females, and admitting one-half of that number to be so infirm as not to be able to leave their beds, the day-rooms will be found totally inadequate to the accommodation of the remainder. It has been observed that the dining-room is intended to be used as a day-room in case of necessity; in such view, a fire-place should be built in each division of the room.

In the workhouses for 200 paupers, up to 600 inclusive, the day-rooms are of better arrangement, and afford the desired space.

The nurseries, for every class of workhouses, are deficient in accommodation, and various measures have been resorted to for obviating this defect; but no general arrangement has been adopted, neither do I see that the buildings afford any means of meeting this want satisfactorily, and it will probably be necessary to erect separate buildings for this purpose. This measure has been carried into effect in a few instances.

The kitchens and wash-houses in buildings for 700 paupers and upwards are very confined, and frequently badly lighted and ventilated. In the buildings accommodating under 700 the kitchens and wash-houses are more commodious and better in every respect than those of the larger class of workhouse; they are quite equal to the wants of the establishments.

The infirmary accommodation has proved insufficient in the more populous unions, more particularly where there is not any fever hospital in the town; in such cases it has been found necessary to occupy the dormitories of the idiot wards, and even those of the probationary wards. However, fever hospitals are now generally in progress, either within the boundary walls of the workhouses or in their immediate vicinity; and as necessity arises, this arrangement will probably be extended to every union.

In the accommodation for idiots the cells and day-room attached are sufficient for the purpose of securing idiots of violent character. In the smaller workhouses this is the only accommodation afforded; in the larger establishments the dormitories for the inoffensive idiots are sufficient, but the day-rooms are very confined and badly ventilated; however, there does not appear to be any objection to allowing this class to resort to the common day-rooms of the establishment.

The idiot wards are totally unfit for the confinement of lunatics.

The airing yards afford the desired space for exercise, and to the rear of the buildings the privies in these yards are sufficient and well situated; this, however, is not the case in the front, or boys and girls' yards, where the privies are a nuisance, more particularly in the summer.

Stabling has been erected at many of the workhouses, and is generally required at the remainder. The distance of the Board-rooms from the townships average from one to two miles, and the guardians must be put both to inconvenience and expense for want of this accommodation on the spot.

The workhouses in the larger towns have been in some cases already filled with paupers, and should an unfavourable season occur, either by failure of crops or severe winter, many of the establishments will certainly prove inadequate to the wants of the unions. The buildings, however, are so arranged as to admit of the wing accommodation being extended, both for males and females, should it be found necessary at any period.

Ventilation.

The main buildings of the workhouses are ventilated upon one uniform principle; viz. by means of towers, within which are the stairs leading to the upper wards. The ventilation is carried out by openings over the doors of the dormitories, and by the passages leading to the landings on the different floors, the foul air passing out either by windows or *louvers* immediately under the roof of the towers. Independent of this ventilation and of the windows in the dormitories, &c., iron ventilators have been introduced in the walls of the building, and occasionally an opening left in the upper parts of the gables. This ventilation seems to be sufficient, with the following exceptions: the day-rooms in buildings for 700 paupers and upwards, and the rear dormitories adjoining the wings on the first floor; the only ventilation in these rooms consists of one door and window in each. The use of stoves led to the closing of the chimney openings in the day-rooms; they are, however, being generally replaced by grates, and the ventilation will in consequence be improved, but still insufficient.

The application of the iron ventilators has led to much discussion and complaint. No general arrangement for placing these ventilators appears to have been made; occasionally they are on a level with the beds, sometimes three or four feet above; it is only in the gables that any uniformity of arrangement is shown. As a means of ventilation, they are of little use, being generally neglected; in some cases they have been removed by order of the guardians, as admitting wet into the walls; and in the later erected buildings they have been altogether omitted in the outside wing-walls. In this situation I think they should be removed, and the openings carefully built up, leaving those in the gables, which are well placed, and if properly attended to, of undoubted advantage.

The infirmaries generally require improved ventilation. At present, in the lower wards, the front windows and side door are the only openings; in the upper wards the same, with the addition of an opening immediately under the roof,

leading to the ventilating cupola: in both cases the openings are confined to the front and side of the rooms, leaving the remainder without any means by which the foul air can escape. At several of the infirmaries the ventilation has already been improved by opening the rear walls immediately under the ceilings, and which may be closed or otherwise under the medical officer's instruction, and some such arrangement is generally required. The removal of a party wall on the upper floor of several of the buildings has much improved the ventilation and added very considerably to the accommodation: this is a great improvement applicable to every infirmary.

Supply of Water.

Of the 130 workhouses, 30 are now deficient in the supply of water, principally confined to the summer months. Originally only one well was sunk at each workhouse; and although usually tested before the building was occupied, by pumping for a certain period, which gave a satisfactory result, it soon became apparent, as the occupation of the buildings proceeded, and a general and daily drain upon the wells took place, that the supply would be insufficient, originating a necessity for either sinking second wells or further deepening the original ones: the result is as above stated. The necessity for sinking a second well at every workhouse is obvious. One pump, subject to constant work, must be liable to wear and accident; and many of the workhouses are in localities where competent workmen are not to be had, and at a distance from a supply of water. In such cases the inmates must be put to great inconvenience, and expense must be incurred, the latter soon amounting to sums equal to the cost of a second well; indeed this has already occurred at two or three of the workhouses. In addition to the supply of water from the wells, rain-water tanks have been formed, two usually at the larger stations, and one at the smaller. These are intended for the use of the wash-houses, and the supply afforded has generally proved sufficient during the greater portion of the year. A failure occasionally takes place during the summer months. The supply, however, may be increased to a great extent by leading water (which now runs to waste) to the tanks, or by constructing other tanks, for which the roofs afford ample means of supply.

It has been said that the terms of the contracts, as relating to the supply of water, have not been carried out; and that, in consequence, expense has been incurred for deepening wells, &c. I do not see that such statement can be borne out. It is clear that, generally, there was every reason to believe that the wells afforded a sufficient supply when the buildings were taken off the contractors' hands, having been tested as before stated. Whenever there appeared fair grounds for compelling contractors to deepen wells, it seems to have been taken advantage of; and it is only under peculiar circumstances that such work has formed an extra charge upon the building.

Drainage.

The general system of drainage adopted is that of overflow from the privy-pits, as well as drains from the kitchens and wash-houses, leading in the greater number of cases merely through the inner enclosure wall, leaving the completion of the work as employment for the paupers, or otherwise, as might be found advisable. At some of the workhouses dry cesspools have been built in convenient places, between the inner and outer enclosures; in others advantage has been taken of natural hollows or quarries, to which the drainage has been conveyed. In these cases, the cesspools, &c. are satisfactorily used for the purpose of making manure. This system, no doubt, will be generally adopted; it is the most economical in arrangement, and the larger portion of the work may be effected by pauper labour. In addition to the manure required for the purposes of the cultivated ground of the establishment, sums have been realized by the sale of the surplus, varying from 15 to 25*l.* per annum.

It is quite evident that no better arrangement for drainage generally can be devised. At the same time an absolute necessity will exist for the closest attention to the leading and overflow drains, and more particularly to the periodical cleansing of the privy-pits. These arrangements have already been carried out by the Boards of Guardians at many of the workhouses, generally with judgment, and certainly at a less cost than had the work been provided for in the original contracts. In some cases the drainage has been carried to rivers and
natural

natural outlets off the premises; but I apprehend, as the value of the manure comes to be understood, that the drainage will be intercepted and applied as above. At present, also, there are cases where the privy soil runs upon the public roads, and into streams which afford supply of water to cottages. Manure pits have also been sunk in front of the buildings, and adjoining public roads. These are cases of nuisance which should and may be avoided.

Enclosure.

THE original plan of enclosure was confined to an inner boundary wall, embracing the airing yards only, leaving the outer space to be enclosed by a bank and ditch. This arrangement, applied to the workhouses in the vicinity of large towns, soon proved insufficient, and has led to the outer boundary being also enclosed by a wall, and which appears to be necessary in such positions generally. For workhouses in the less populous neighbourhoods the ditch, and bank planted with quicks, will be found sufficient, except where boundaries abut upon public roads, in such positions a wall becomes of absolute necessity. The enclosure of ditch and bank will require uninterrupted attention, which may be met by the masters of the workhouses with pauper labour.

The rear enclosure and division walls of the infirmary and idiot wards are usually too low, seven feet in height, which is insufficient; at many of the workhouses these walls have been raised from two to three feet, and this seems to be necessary at all the workhouses where the outer boundary consists of ditch and bank.

Wet penetrating the Walls.

THIS has been a general source of complaint, and apparently with good cause. However, circumstances connected with the material and execution of the work require to be taken into consideration, and the result of the late inspection is much more favourable than that of the preceding year; indeed there seems but little doubt that the workhouses, with few exceptions, will become dry in the course of another year. The cause of wet penetrating the walls may be ascribed to various circumstances: the dispatch with which it was considered necessary to complete the buildings led to the conducting of the work through winter and summer, wet and dry; in consequence, the walls became repeatedly saturated before the buildings could be covered in. The nature of the material of necessity made use of in many of the buildings is such as to retard the drying process, and such buildings receive a fresh accession of moisture into the interior of the walls on every fall of rain, until the outside mortar joints become set: these also have generally been much injured either by rain or frost, and thus the drying operation becomes lengthened. It has been found necessary, in numerous instances, to protect the walls either by cement rendering or pointing, or by roughcast; this necessity, however, does not arise from defective work, but from the causes above stated. The difficulty attending the building operations will be understood when it is explained, that of 860 working days, when nearly every workhouse was in progress, 436 were wet. Another cause of wet walls is the neglected state of the spouting; the only wet observable in several of the buildings is entirely attributable to this neglect. A further source of wet originates in the want of eaves, gutters, and down spouts. In a country so proverbially wet, it seems absolutely necessary that the walls be fully protected. The want of spouting has been observed by the guardians of several of the workhouses, and in consequence eaves, gutters, and down pipes have been added, so as to complete the whole of the buildings, the good effect of which is evident in the increased dryness of the walls.

All the unoccupied buildings, as well as those allowed to remain in that state a long time previous to occupation, are extremely damp; some of these buildings have been completed for periods varying from one to nearly three years. The airing of them has been neglected, and it is well known that unoccupied buildings soon assume a damp which requires a long period of occupation to overcome. In these buildings also, and in some others, the yards have not been properly levelled, and the surface-water is thrown against the walls and into the foundations, causing the lower parts of the walls to be wet, alike injurious to the building and to the occupants.

It should be understood, with reference to wet walls, that the usual precautions adopted in Ireland for the prevention of damp have not been resorted to, except in a few cases. Taking this into consideration, the buildings, as a general question, may be considered fairly dry. The favourable summer now passed has had an evident good effect; several of the buildings reported wet last year are now dry. The different masters of the workhouses state that the walls are becoming more dry every season; still, from causes before explained, a considerable number of the buildings will require to be repointed or other precautions taken to prevent wet penetrating the walls.

Wet penetrating by the windows has also been much complained of; this has partly arisen from the shrinking of the wood-work and absence of secure pointing round the frames, also from neglect in the application of paints. The two first may be remedied by pointing round the frames, and the latter by painting the casements, and stopping the glass and openings between iron work and frame, which ought to have been done within a certain period after the completion of the building. It is usual and necessary to paint outside work periodically: this being carefully done, and the stopping of the glass made perfect, I do not consider that the small portion of wet which will penetrate by the opening part of the casement, and which cannot be well avoided, can be of any consequence or worthy of complaint.

The absence of lead flashings, and for which cement fillets and weather-slating has been substituted, and which has frequently failed, has certainly admitted wet down the chimney breasts; and when applied to lower buildings abutting against higher, occasioned by the shrinking of the roofs, and settlement of masonry, causing the cement to crack, in some cases lead flashings have been already applied as the remedy; and perhaps, under the difficulty of obtaining workmen in many of the localities accustomed to the use of cement, this may be the more safe proceeding: however, I am aware that many public buildings in Ireland are entirely without lead flashings, and yet perfectly dry. The application of lead flashings after the building has been completed, will of course create a greater expenditure than if used in the regular course of building.

Extra Work.

THE subject of extra work does not seem to be clearly understood by the guardians, who have confounded it with fixtures, fittings, &c. Extra work embraces only such as foundations and alterations made during the progress of the building, which could not be foreseen, and consequently not embraced in the original contract. Such work as this should not be mixed up with fixtures, &c., which are of absolute necessity, foreseen and calculated upon. In the returns of expenditure published by the Poor Law Commissioners, fixtures and fittings are embraced in the accounts, under the head of extra work, which has evidently led to an erroneous impression, and swelled the apparent cost of extra work to a large amount. The original contract provided for what may be termed the shell of the building, without reference to fixtures, fittings, or furniture, or any of the items introduced in the extra bills. This arrangement has arisen out of a want of maturity in the plans, probably caused by the necessity stated to have existed for carrying out the completion of the workhouses with the utmost dispatch. The non-introduction of the fixtures, &c. into the original contract, and the omission to act upon the clause in the agreement which provides that, "in the extra works a list of prices be attached to the articles of agreement; all prices of such additional work, being first approved by the architect, must be attached to the contract previous to the execution of it," has unquestionably not only led to the complaints of the guardians on the score of extra work, but also to much additional expense. This, however, must not be taken as an admission that the contractors have been overpaid for the work done by them, but that such work would have been performed by the same parties at a less expense had the fixtures, fittings, &c., comprised in the extra bills been provided for in the original contract. This is fully admitted by several of the most practical and extensive contractors, and also by other competent parties whose opinion I have thought it advisable to obtain: the average of the opinions give 12½ per cent. excess upon the paid accounts for extra works, and this per-centage agrees with the cost of the extra works framed at Ordnance prices, giving the contractor

tractors the advantage of numerous amounts carried out on the bills which it has been found impossible to check or compare.

I should observe, with reference to the extraordinary amount of charges by various contractors for extra work, and the confused and improper manner in which the bills are made out, in numerous cases admitting of deductions varying from one quarter to three quarters of the total amount of the bills, I have learned that several of the contractors are not practical builders, and persons have been employed to measure work and prepare accounts who have been totally incompetent to the duty. In justice to the contractors who have furnished correct and properly detailed accounts, I put forward this observation.

Construction.

From a careful consideration of the plans of the workhouses, without reference to the alterations and improvements effected during the progress of the buildings, they appear to have been prepared under the most economical arrangements, and no unnecessary work can be traced in any part; indeed, I am inclined to consider that economy has been carried to an extreme not desirable in public buildings where durability becomes a leading and important consideration. There are two points in the construction upon which I entertained a doubt: first, whether the wing walls of the main buildings are of sufficient thickness to ensure durability; second, whether the wing roofs are of proper construction to ensure durability. Not relying on my own judgment, I have taken the opinion of competent parties. The most favourable opinion is: "I consider the wing walls to be of sufficient thickness to sustain the weight of the roof, and the construction of the roof sufficient for the purpose, if executed with good material." Other opinions state, "The walls are of sufficient thickness, under a roof of proper construction:" also, "Taking the height of the walls and exposed situations into consideration, the walls should be one-fifth thicker, and the wing roofs are not of proper construction to ensure durability." Under a careful consideration of the subject, I am of opinion, that had the wing walls been given an extra thickness of four or five inches, and a trussed roof applied to the wings, the additional expense would have been amply repaid by the increased durability of the buildings, which I have before alluded to as a most important feature in the character of public buildings. I should here observe, that although a large portion of the buildings exhibit numerous fractures, there are at present only two or three settlements of at all serious character observable; in several instances, the wing walls in the upper dormitories show an inclination to spread, evidently arising from the weak construction of the roof. I am borne out in the opinion, that neither the wing walls nor roof are of a character to ensure durability, by some of the most experienced contractors who carried out the plans; these parties concur in the opinion as to the absence of durability to a certain extent, and more particularly in the exposed situations of many of the workhouses, where they do not receive protection from adjoining buildings. In conclusion, there can be no doubt that had the wing walls been given an extra thickness, and a king or queen post roof applied to the wings, that a period of many years would have been added to the durability of the buildings.

The extreme economy attending the plans and building arrangements, and the haste with which it has been deemed necessary to carry the works to completion, has evidently led to a want of maturity in the plans to be carried out, and from which have arisen all the defects and complaints. That the plans had not been matured is made evident by the numerous and beneficial alterations carried out during the progress of the buildings, more particularly those under the later contracts. I need only observe, the position and construction of the towers, enlarged day-rooms, substitution of gangways and sleeping platforms in lieu of bedsteads, the enlargement of kitchens and wash-houses, substitution of grates for stoves, wood for iron casements, and improved ventilation, all being improvements of valuable character. Had circumstances permitted a more mature consideration of the plans, the above improvements would have formed parts of the arrangement brought into the original contracts, and also to the introduction into such contracts of all the work now embraced under the head of extra work, with the exception of extras upon foundations, which must always be open to such charges.

The application of rubble work to the walls of the workhouses, in addition to economy, became a matter of necessity, arising out of the nature of the material afforded in the localities of the various buildings. This description of work is exhibited in all the buildings in Ireland of ages past, as well as of modern times, with the exception in the latter of ornamental buildings, public and private, of large cost. I have, however, observed throughout Ireland that buildings of rubble masonry are invariably protected by rough-cast or plaster, &c. In addition to this precaution against wet, the interior of buildings of a certain character are further protected by brick linings, or other methods. I allude to this to show that the question of wet walls, so much complained of, is not to be attributed to defective work in the walling, but to the absence of those precautions natural to the moist climate of Ireland.

The arrangement of the window frames would have been more satisfactory had reveals been used; and had this work been embraced in the original contracts, probably but little more than the sum now required to be expended in securing the frames would have been introduced in the builders' charges.

With reference to the different material used in the carpentry, the general character is fair, and the construction appears sufficient, subject to the remarks on the wing roofs. An inferior description of material has in some cases been used, but the locality of the buildings rendered it difficult, if not impracticable, to obtain the material provided by the contract, unless at extreme prices. On the substitution of inferior material, the difference of value has always been deducted from the contractor's accounts. It is hardly necessary to observe that the introduction of inferior material operates against the durability of the building.

The substitution of gangways and sleeping platforms in lieu of bedsteads and flooring, as originally contemplated, is a measure of very great advantage, not only as a better means of accommodation, but also originating a large amount of saving both in the first outlay and in the repair of bedsteads, which in a few years would have become necessary from fair wear. The saving arising from this alteration may be fairly estimated at 25,000*l.* In carrying out this alteration, some expense had been incurred in laying floors under the original plan; but the cases are few, and do not affect the amount of saving referred to.

The earth or mortar floors have generally failed; in but few instances are the original floors now in use: this will suffice to show that the composition has been generally defective. However, I am of opinion, that had these floors been made of proper material, and carefully laid down, they would have been found durable, and preferable either to flagging or other material now being made use of to replace them. I consider the original intention good, and would have been successful if carried out as provided for in the contracts.

Stoves, where used, have been objected to, and are now being generally replaced by grates, which are more applicable, more durable, and less expensive.

The slating has generally been well done; Welch slates in most cases have been used; in a few instances, however, Killaloe slates have been applied; these are not so durable as the former, and have caused complaint; the contracts, however, admitted of the use of them under certain circumstances, with the sanction of the Commissioners' architect.

The ironmongery and plumbers' work is generally good.

(signed) *Geo. Barney,*
Lieutenant-colonel Royal Engineers.

COPY of TREASURY MINUTE, dated 21st February 1845.

My Lords have before them the Report of Lieutenant-colonel Barney, of the Royal Engineers, the Commissioner whom My Lords had appointed to examine into the state of the several workhouses in Ireland, for the erection of which money had been advanced under the provisions of the Act 1 & 2 Vict. c. 56.

It appears from that Report that the sums which have been severally applied to that object, and which are charged upon the poor-rates of the several unions, in conformity with the provisions of that Act; have, to a limited extent, exceeded the proper cost of each such building; and farther, that owing to defects

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in the original construction of the several buildings, repairs are now required to an extent stated in the list of workhouses annexed to the said Report, by which the poor-rates of the unions have become liable to additional burthen, which the proper construction of the buildings, in the first instance, would have rendered unnecessary.

My Lords forbear to enter into the causes which have led to this excess in the original cost, or to the defects in the original construction of these buildings for which the several unions are now required to provide.

Much is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the circumstances under which workhouses were at first undertaken, and to the limited time within which it was required to complete them, and may in a great degree be considered to have been unavoidable; but My Lords consider that when Parliament required the guardians of the several unions in Ireland to provide by a charge upon the poor-rates the sums necessary for the repayment of the advances made from the Consolidated Fund for the erection of workhouses, it was not the intention of Parliament to place upon them any charge beyond that which might be found to be necessary for the erection of suitably constructed buildings for the reception of the poor.

My Lords are therefore of opinion, that it would not be inconsistent with the intention of Parliament to relieve the several unions from so much of the charge to which they are now legally liable, as is shown by the Report of Lieutenant-colonel Barney to be in excess. Beyond this My Lords think it neither just nor expedient to afford any relief.

After the proposed reduction of charge shall have taken place, the several unions will be in possession of buildings fully worth the money which they will be required to pay, and My Lords could under no circumstances admit of any exemption from such payment.

Write to the Public Works Loan Commissioners desiring them to deduct from the principal sums due by the several unions, specified in the enclosed list, the sums respectively annexed to their names, and having done so, to proceed to call upon the several guardians for the sums either now due, or which may hereafter fall due, and in default of payment to take measures from time to time for enforcing them.

Acquaint Mr. M. Sutton for the information of Secretary Sir James Graham, in order that he may communicate to the Poor Law Commissioners the views of My Lords on this subject.

UNION WORKHOUSES (IRELAND).

COPY of REPORT of the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the Execution of the CONTRACTS for certain UNION WORKHOUSES in *Ireland*, &c.

(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
20 March 1845.
